

RHETORICAL ROLE OF CULTURAL SYMBOLS IN DENTISTRY TRADE ADVERTISING

РИТОРИЧЕСКАЯ РОЛЬ КУЛЬТУРНЫХ СИМВОЛОВ В ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНО ОРИЕНТИРОВАННОЙ РЕКЛАМЕ В ОТРАСЛИ СТОМАТОЛОГИИ

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Advertising is perhaps the most remarkable mass medium of our age.

Jean Bauldillard

Nowadays dentistry is described as a well established professional discourse community. Dentistry discourse is an institutional discourse, i.e. it contains "features which are attributed to institutional practice" [5, p. 15]. It encompasses a whole assemblage of activities, practices, events, instruments and settings referring to oral health. Professionals who are working in dental field have common public goals which are to prevent and control oral and craniofacial diseases, conditions, and injuries, and improve access to preventive services and dental care. Dentistry discourse is far from being a homogenous one-level communication conglomerate of events, practices, situations. This contemplates the development of relevant language ideologies within the field to encourage international communication. Though dental professionals, who are non-English speakers, are quite good sorting out subject-related technical words, the results of our previous reports have shown they may experience some obstacles in respect of some cultural differences, register of Pan-Western dental discourse, which they try to adhere being strongly oriented toward the American journals as the USA is recognised as the leader in this field [3, p.109]. Dentistry discourse involves both international and national-specific professional values, corporate interests that promote institutional identity. This culture is passed on within the profession, but sometimes may remain obscure to neophytes. Despite the importance of dentistry as a practice and a science, despite social and anthropological significance of dentistry discourse, it is still one of the least studied phenomena from linguistic, cognitive, communicative

and anthropological standpoints. Therefore, the present study will focus on the usage of the most recognizable cultural symbols in print trade advertising and to explore their rhetorical role.

The corpus of trade advertising materials comprises a total 60 advertisements for dental equipment, devices, products and services published in the following reputable international dental journals as “British Dental Journal”, “Journal of American Dental Association”, “Dentistry Today” as well as various trade brochures, leaflets, booklets for 2013 – 2017.

Companies use advertising as a communication tool between them and consumers, therefore by analyzing and studying consumer buying behaviour and buying preferences companies devise their marketing strategies. Advertising creates and uses cultural symbols as representations of essentially familiar ideas in order to fulfil its fundamental purpose: the selling of goods and services. A cultural symbol is a physical manifestation that signifies the ideology of a particular culture or that merely has meaning within a culture. Cultural symbols can be presented by names of people, situations, texts, utterances, which have been used outside the original discourse for many years. Cultural symbols in advertising can take a number of forms, including corporate artworks, real or fictitious celebrity figures, slogans and all manner of social stereotypes. The use of cultural symbols in advertising has been the subject of much academic inquiry. Some scholars have explored how advertising creates these symbols, while others have studied the symbols' effects. Within this latter category there are two streams of thought: one argues that advertising manipulates people through such symbols; the other suggests that consumers decode advertising messages through their own experiences and can resist the sales message [1].

Most of the pieces of dentistry trade advertisement studied lay greater emphasis on factual information, thus appealing to logic and reasoning. The appealing to rationality of the target group is implemented by the structure of advertisement texts, in which logo and tag lines may be optional. The texts of dentistry trade advertisements provide sufficient amount of specific factual information about products focusing on their exceptional benefits e.g. functions, ergonomics, typically supported by hard data as statistics, research results, facts, experts' and customers' opinion. It is well-known fact that emotional aspects of communication imprint better and last longer, while rational communications are less likely to be absorbed and last only a short time [1]. Therefore, some advertisements are interspersed with symbolic names, for example:

AvaDent Digital Dentures breakthrough, digital, CAD/CAM technology makes all other dentures obsolete.

AvaDent offers you a computer-precise fit never before possible, in as little as two appointments!

If Steve Jobs had created a denture, it just might have been an AvaDent Denture

Steve Jobs, the Silicon Valley icon, transformed a foundering computer company into a giant of science, commerce and culture, with a broad influence on movies, music, and social life. His name has become a metaphor for high-tech pioneering, appreciation of clients' needs and expectations, team work. The use of metaphors in advertising expands dimensional thinking of consumers and enhances their responses to advertising.

The Mona Lisa is probably the most recognisable, the most visited, the most written about piece of art in the world. The way Leonardo da Vinci painted this portrait deviated from the traditional way women were painted like this in Italy. Leonardo's approach was Promethean in many aspects and started a trend in portrait painting, which influenced European painting up till 1800s. This masterpiece has stood the test of time and continues to inspire and amaze visitors to the Louvre from around the world. All these strong characteristics are conveyed with the name of the painting that is perceived as a cultural symbol in the following advertising text:

NuSimplicity™ Patient Chair Combines Ergonomic Design and High Technology with Flexibility and Economic Value

*Introducing NuSimplicity™. To call it "just another chair" is like calling the **Mona Lisa** "just another painting".*

Sometimes symbolic proper names are incorporated in the brand names, for example:

***da Vinci Dental Studios** for the Smile of a Lifetime*

***da Vinci Dental Studios** is the premier cosmetic laboratory in the nation*

Many historians and scholars regard Leonardo as the prime exemplar of the "Universal Genius" or "Renaissance Man". According to art historian Helen Gardner, the scope and depth of his interests were without precedent in recorded history, and "his mind and personality seem to us superhuman, while the man himself mysterious and remote" [3, p. 455]. Da Vinci Dental Studios is also known as the original pioneer in cosmetic dentistry by creating the most beautiful, believable smiles in Hollywood and providing unparalleled technical support and customer service on every case, from a single central to full arch reconstruction to new smile design. Thus, the name of da Vinci in this case means innovative, revolutionary approaches and universalism in providing dental services.

As it has been previously mentioned, artefacts can be regarded as cultural symbols as well. The advertising text describing Estelite Sigma Quick composites, universal, supra-nano filled restorative materials with high aesthetics indicated for anterior and posterior tooth restoration compares its field-related characteristics like versatility, easiness of use, excellent stability, superior aesthetic and physical properties with Little Black Dress:

*The Clinician's **Little Black Dress**. It's versatile, flattering, and goes with everything. It's ESTELITE® SIGMA QUICK, and it's the new must-have for your composite closet.*

The little black dress often nicknamed as LBD is widely known as a sort of a uniform for all women of taste, as a marker of shifting social codes. This simple black cocktail dress is considered essential to a complete wardrobe by many women, even the most sophisticated fashionmongers and fashion observers. To D. Ludot it is "an iconic, magical garment as it enhances a woman's features and erases imperfections" [4, p.12]. Thus, the characteristics of the composite material are metaphorically linked to the markers of such cultural symbol as LBD.

There are a plenty of the most memorable and most popular catch phrases originated from pop culture that are widely used in advertising. These phrases are usually short, regularly repeated and easily remembered. We revealed the usage of such sort of phrases in the piece of dentistry trade advertising studied:

Don't Worry. Be Happy with Bib-Eze. *Bib-Eze – Disposable Bib Holders. Easy and clean, lightweight, stretchable paper holders, which can easily be removed after the procedure and thrown away with the dirty napkin.*

The title of this iconic song by Bobby McFerrin is taken from a famous quotation by the Indian mystic and sage Meher Baba. The phrase "Don't Worry, Be Happy," is perceived as a motto theme to happiness. The links between disposable bib holders used in daily dental practice and this phrase are implicit for laypersons. But dental professionals are aware of high risk of cross-contamination from patient to patient, and from patient to clinician when using traditional bib clips and holders. Thus, using the Bib-Eze products reduces the likelihood to catch infection; therefore, neither dental doctors nor patients should worry about the possible negative outcomes of the treatment.

Thus, the trend in using cultural symbols and signs regarded as quite effective in commerce advertising is observed to be applicable for dentistry trade advertising as well. These advertisements use the well known artwork quotes as a rhetorical item for enhancing the believability of advertising claims, and for inspiring and influencing the consumers. The study emphasizes the iconic names, phrases, quotes of artwork possess influential axiological potential. Product diversification and growth may demand a product or brand to be introduced on a global level. To develop a successful marketing strategy, an organization must take into consideration the cultural influences of the society and cultural background of the target group where a new product is being introduced. Right "reading" of such quotes from artwork requires a pre-establish knowledge in the mind of audiences to perceive the message accurately and effectively. Moreover, inserting quotes from cultural symbols into the canvas of the trade advertising texts enables to comprise the text, but not to cut down its meaning content. Products or brands advertized by using the rhetoric devices studied seem to be more sophisticated through the use of

metaphors as the attributes of particular symbolic things are transferred onto them. Cultural symbols carry important social meanings that are often used by consumers in enhancing their image in a social context. However, cultural symbols being an effective persuading tool that appeal to both reasoning and emotions are not widely used English dentistry trade advertisement.

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